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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6018
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 2056
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ OCT 0111
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0991
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 1220
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STATE FOR WHA/PPC, WHA/AND, AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: ECUADOR TIP: A GOE PRIORITY

REF: 05 QUITO 316

This is an action request for G/TIP. See para 9.

11. (SBU) Summary: The GOE has shown steady progress arresting and prosecuting TIP cases under new anti-TIP legislation. Approximately 127 cases are in some stage of prosecution since the new law went into effect in June 2005. President Palacio continues to stress TIP as a priority for his administration, recently signing an executive decree that will fund and coordinate a national anti-TIP strategy among several government agencies. Victim assistance, awareness and prevention efforts also recently improved with the establishment of new publicity campaigns, a hotline for TIP tips and information, and GOE assistance to TIP victim shelters. Press has recently highlighted Colombia-to-Ecuador trafficking concerns. Disbursement of approved INCLE funds to support the Ecuadorian specialized investigative units would be a welcome boost to already significant law enforcement efforts. End Summary.

GOE Maintains Commitment to TIP Arrests and Prosecutions

12. (U) The GOE continues to demonstrate commitment to combating TIP under its new anti-TIP statute. Attorney General Cecilia Armas has appointed special TIP prosecutors in the provinces with the greatest TIP problems: Guayas, Pichincha, El Oro and Manabi. The Public Ministry has also created and trained a 36-member specialized police unit, spread over seven major cities, dedicated to victim and witness protection, a crucial component of successful prosecutions. The child welfare police (DINAPEN) and the Embassy-vetted alien smuggling unit (COAC) both issued internal operating instructions to collaborate on TIP investigations. The special TIP prosecutors in El Oro and Pichincha provinces have begun supplying detailed case information to the Embassy, including the status of each case, the names of defendants and victims, and a synopsis of the evidence and charges. Working with ConGen Guayaquil, post is attempting to gain similar information from the TIP prosecutors in Guayas and Manabi provinces.

13. (U) Since the new anti-TIP law was enacted in June 2005, approximately 127 TIP arrests are in some stage of prosecution (this includes arrests for child pornography production, considered to be a TIP crime under Ecuadorian law). Prosecutors are confident convictions will come soon. Ecuadorian police, prosecutors and judges have been trained

in August by the American Bar Association to process these cases.

¶4. (U) Typical of many of the latest arrests includes an operation by DINAPEN on August 10th which busted two adjacent brothels in Quito: seven underage girls and eight undocumented Colombian women were found working in the brothels. In Portoviejo, Manabi province, police arrested five men on September 2 who were alleged to have kidnapped two girls and forced them into prostitution in a hotel. In Guayaquil, DINAPEN arrested a brothel owner on September 12 who had forced an underage girl into prostitution and falsified her identification documents to show she was 18 (note: "voluntary" prostitution by workers over age 18 is legal in Ecuador).

GOE Commitment at Highest Levels

¶5. (U) On August 30, President Palacio signed an Executive Decree codifying Ecuador's National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Plan provides funding and a strategy for an integrated GOE response to the TIP problem. The President ordered the Ministries of Government, Foreign Affairs, Social Welfare, Labor and the National Institute for Child and Family to work together implementing and monitoring the plan. During the signing ceremony, the President publicly declared fighting TIP a GOE priority and policy. President Palacio mentioned combating TIP as a national political priority in his address to the UN General Assembly. Ambassador Carlos Lopez Damm, Undersecretary for Migratory Issues, also highlighted TIP during his address to the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration in New York. Victim Assistance and Awareness a High Priority

¶6. (U) Ecuador is steadily improving its victim assistance infrastructure. In addition to creating the witness and victim protection police unit mentioned above, the Public Ministry signed a cooperative agreement with a Quito shelter dedicated exclusively to TIP victims. The Public Ministry will provide per victim funding for lodging, meals and educational workshops. The NGO "Our Youth Foundation" will run the shelter and provide professional services including social work, psychological counseling, and legal and medical assistance. A pilot program funded by USAID, and provided for by the Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2005, will provide \$250,000 to work with INNFA to identify, renovate and upgrade other shelters around the country dedicated to TIP victims.

¶7. (U) Anti-TIP awareness and prevention efforts recently expanded. The GOE has established a three digit national "101" hotline to serve as a clearinghouse for tips on trafficking cases. Call centers will also be able to provide limited victim assistance such as referrals to shelters and other information. INNFA is spending over \$1 million promoting the 101 number and in other anti-TIP awareness campaigns. The Ministry of Tourism also announced a TV, radio and other media campaign against sexual tourism. Finally, the Ministry of Economy and Finance is providing \$60,000 for a "Look into my Eyes" children's rights campaign that includes anti-trafficking themes.

Trafficking Growing Across Colombia Border

¶8. (U) Recent press reports have identified a growing trafficking problem near the Colombian border in northern Carchi province. Colombian sex workers reportedly cross the border into Ecuador, undocumented or with false documents, to earn more money for their services. Twenty-three Colombian sex workers were reportedly recently deported from Carchi for being undocumented and working illegally in Ecuador.

Action Request for G/TIP

¶9. (SBU) The Embassy appreciates G/TIP approval of additional FY 2006 support to the GOE child welfare police (DINAPEN) and the Embassy-vetted alien smuggling unit (COAC). Funds would support joint COAC-DINAPEN TIP investigations and law enforcement efforts (for additional detail, see RefTel). COAC and DINAPEN have already moved ahead to cooperate on investigations and arrests, but hope to do more with additional funding. Embassy requests speedy allocation of these funds to build on existing progress.

Comment

¶10. (SBU) TIP remains a key area of bilateral cooperation with the GOE, and this cooperation is bearing fruit. The GOE is energized at all levels and continues to work hard to maintain momentum in the fight against TIP. We believe the motivation to improve comes more from within than from Embassy prodding. We are seeing evidence of this in law enforcement, where prosecutors with limited USG contact are building and pushing TIP cases. The police chief of Portoviejo, in populous but impoverished Manabi province, recently declared a major local initiative to combat TIP. With national elections approaching, we are hopeful that enhanced public awareness and improved government efforts to address TIP will be preserved and sustained, despite the change of national government.

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